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From: Noam Neusner [noam@neusner.com]
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2009 4:40 PM
To: Noam Neusner
Subject: Turkey PM Erdogan: "Anti-Semitism is a crime against humanity."

2009 JAN 26 PM 1:36
 CRM/ISS/REGISTRATION UNIT

Friends,

Many of you have expressed strong concerns about recent statements by Turkey PM Erdogan, as well as recent incidents of anti-Semitism in Turkey. I have communicated to the Turkish Embassy your views, and they are intensely interested in addressing them. Towards that goal, I have been instructed to share with you the translation of these excerpts from a speech given by PM Erdogan at a meeting of the ruling AKP party last Friday. These comments were only partially reported in the Turkish press, and you may find them interesting to read:

...“Anti-Semitism is a crime against humanity. I am one of the first leaders to say this. I say this as a Prime Minister in the region with a strong voice, anti Semitism and Islamophobia is a huge danger. This land has never been an accomplice to this crime against humanity; nor did it turn a blind eye to it or tolerated it. On the contrary, when the Jews were faced with persecution, it was our ancestors who opened their arms to them. We are part of a civilization of love and tolerance. We cannot accept any kind of ethnic, religious or sectarian discrimination, and we cannot tolerate those who do that.

“No matter the religion, language, ethnicity, or denomination of a person, whoever lives under this flag is a first class citizen of this country. We all breathe the same air, eat the food offered by this land, and live under the same sky. We share the same destiny under the broader identity of Turkish citizenship. We equally benefit from the climate of tolerance of these lands and this civilization.

“The Republic of Turkey and its Government are the guarantor of the peace and security of all the minorities in Turkey, namely the Armenians, the Jews, the Greek Orthodox community and other Christians... These kinds of [anti-Semitic] expressions cannot be used by someone who has grasped the sensitivity of Turkish citizenship or someone who understands and knows the deep-rooted spirit of tolerance guiding the Turkish people. I cannot tolerate that anyone feels him or herself under pressure or anxiety in my country.

“...It is [incumbent upon] the responsibility of everybody to pay attention that the protests, the reactions and the comments that are made do not offend our own citizens. We understand that demonstrations are made, feelings on what's happening in Gaza are expressed and these actions are denounced. However, as I said, it is never acceptable to provoke our citizens against another group of our own citizens. We can never approve that. We will not and we cannot allow any attempt that would call into question the boundless tolerance culture of this country.”

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